(iii) The officers of the State Governments' and the Ministry conducted surprise checks of the FPSs to over see the quality of foodgrains being distributed through TPDS.

(iv) The officers of the Department designated as 'Area Officers' for monitoring the TPDS work in the respective States also undertake visits to the storage depots and the FPSs, during their visit to the States to check the quality of foodgrains being issued.

Scrapping of Essential Commodities Act

964. SHRI DINA NATH MISHRA:
MISS MABEL REBELLO:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering FICCI Task Force recommendations on scrapping the Essential Commodities Act in order to make Indian agricultural products globally competitive; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Extension of Antyodaya Anna Yojana

965. SHRI RUMANDLA RAAMACHANDRAYYA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether in order to relieve the economic burden from the destitute senior citizens and tribals Government have decided to provide them foodgrains at a subsidized prices;

(b) if so, whether his Ministry's decision to extend the Antyodaya Anna Yojana from one crore to two crores among estimated number of Below Poverty Line families in the country came as they could not be

covered earlier due to the ceilling of 15.33 per cent; and

(c) if so, what is the requirement of foodgrains to cover one crore additional families estimated under this programme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SUBHASH MAHARIA): (a) to (c) The question of extending the scope of the Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) as part of the initiative towards providing support and food security to the most vulnerable sections such as old people, widows and disabled persons, without family or societal support, is receiving attention.

Food security

†966. SHRIMATI KUM KUM RAI: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the foodgrains security is a bigger danger than the population growth; and

(b) if so, the details as well as the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SUBHASH MAHARIA): (a) and (b) There is no danger to the foodgrains security from the population growth.

Essential Commodities for H.P.

967. SHRI ANIL SHARMA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the quantity of wheat, rice, kerosene and sugar allotted to Himachal Pradesh, district-wise, during 2000-01, 2001-02 and for ten months from April, 2002 to January, 2003 for distribution through Public Distribution System;

(b) whether Government have effected any change in the policy of distribution of wheat, rice, kerosene and sugar through the PDS during the above period in the State; and

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.